



1111 Broadway, Suite 800, Oakland, CA 94607 AlamedaCountySR2S.org info@alamedacountysr2s.org

March 12, 2021

Principal Kilian Betlach Elmhurst United Middle School 1800 98th Avenue Oakland, CA 94603

RE: School Safety Assessment at Elmhurst United Middle

Dear Principal Betlach,

Thank you for participating in a school safety assessment (SSA) with the Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program. This packet contains an Existing Conditions Memo and Improvement Plan Map. The memo summarizes the existing conditions and what the SR2S team heard from stakeholders during the observation period and discussion. The document also contains educational and encouragement programmatic recommendations that the schools can pursue with the SR2S Program. The Improvement Plan Map contains infrastructure recommendations that Oakland and Oakland Unified can implement.

If you have questions, comments, or wish to follow-up with the Program on the SSA or recommended programmatic recommendations, please contact your school site coordinator: Sheila Islam sislam@alamedacountysr2s.org

To follow-up with City of Oakland staff about implementing improvements within their jurisdiction, please contact the City's SR2S contact or local City Council representative: Lucas Woodward Assistant Engineer II, Bureau of Great Streets, OakDOT Iwoodward@oaklandca.gov

Sincerely,

Denise Turner

Denise Turner | Alameda County SR2S Program Manager

Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools 1111 Broadway, Suite 800 | Oakland, CA 94607 510.208.7461



School Safety Assessment Technical Memorandum

Elmhurst United Middle School

1800 98th Avenue, Oakland, CA 94603

Oakland Unified School District

February 2020



The Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program is a program of the Alameda County Transportation Commission (alamedactc.org) and is funded with Alameda County's local sales tax Measure B, regional, state and federal funds.

Elmhurst United Middle School

A school safety assessment was conducted at Elmhurst United Middle School in Oakland during the afternoon dismissal on Thursday, February 14, 2020. The assessment was attended by representatives from the City of Oakland, Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools staff, Elmhurst United staff and parents, and members of the neighborhood community.

Participants included:

- Beaver Boonsook, Transportation Engineer, Oakland Department of Transportation (DOT)
- Jason Patton, Senior Transportation Planner, Oakland DOT
- Warren Logan, Policy Director of Mobility and Interagency Relations, City of Oakland
- Noel Pond-Danchik, Transportation Planner, Oakland DOT
- Kyra Mungia, Mayor's Office, City of Oakland
- George Naylor, Oakland Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission
- Sean Mullen, School Site Coordinator, Alameda County SR2S team
- Andre Huff, Engineer, Alameda County SR2S team
- Aleida Andrino-Chavez, Engineer, Alameda County SR2S team
- Brett Hondorp, Planner, Alameda County SR2S team
- Otto Melara, Planner, Alameda County SR2S team
- Nick Aguilera, Planner, Alameda County SR2S team
- Maria Sanchez, Staff, Elmhurst United Middle School
- Laura D., Staff, Elmhurst United Middle School
- Officer A. Alcantar, Oakland Police Department
- Officer J. Endaya, Oakland Police Department
- Renee Sykes, Oakland Police Department
- Elmhurst United Middle School parents

School Information

Location & Enrollment

	Address:	1800 98 th Avenue Oakland, CA 94603	
	Morning Bell(s):	8:15 am	
ELMHURST UNITED MIDDLE SCHOOL	Afternoon Bell(s):	3:15 pm (all days except Wed); 12:25 pm (Wed)	
	Grade Levels:	6 - 8	
	Enrollment:	372	
	School Type (neighborhood/ magnet/charter):	Neighborhood	

Student Travel Data

Students' Proximity to		Less than ¼ mile (5-min. walk): 25%				
	School (school estimate):	Between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile (5-10-min. walk): 25%				
		Between $\frac{1}{2}$ and 1 mile (10 to 20-min. walk): 25%				
		Greater than 1 mile (more than 20-min. walk): 25%				
	School (school estimate).	Between $\frac{1}{2}$ and 1 mile (10 to 20-min. walk): 25%				

Student Travel Mode	Recent SR2S Hand Tally Data:		
Info:	Spring 2020		
	Walking: 50%		
	Biking: 1%		
	School Bus: 3%		
	Transit: 25%		
	Carpool: 5%		
	Family Vehicle: 16%		
	Other: N/A		

Bikes, Buses, and Drop-off/Pick-up

Does the school have bike racks? What is the capacity? Is it secure bike parking? On a typical day, what percentage of racks are used?	The school has two bicycle racks that are within school grounds, but they are not secure Very low utilization rates
Does the school have special pick-up/drop- off policies/ procedures?	No

Street Profiles

Street Name	Width	Lanes	Posted Speed Limit	Traffic Volumes	Notes
98 th Avenue	45 feet	2 travel lanes and a center turn lane	30 mph	21,246	Class II bike lanes on either side
Plymouth Street	32 feet	2 lanes	25 mph	3,089	Street parking on either side
Birch Street	32 feet	2 lanes	25 mph	Approximately 1,000	Street parking on either side

Pedestrian- and Bicycle-Involved Collision Summary 2014-2018* The collision summary table shows all bicycle- and pedestrian-involved collisions within one-half mile of the school. These collisions may or may not be related to school travel.

Radius from School	Total Collisions	Fatal Collisions	Severe Injury Collisions	Visible Injury Collisions	Complaint of Pain Collisions	Pedestrian Collisions	Bicycle Collisions
< ¼ mi	18	0	5	3	10	12	6
¼ mi – ½ mi	57	0	8	13	36	43	14
Total	75	0	13	16	46	55	20

Source: UC Berkeley – Transportation Injury Mapping System, Safe Transportation Research and Education Center, University of California, Berkeley, 2014 -2018

*In January 2020 there was a fatal collision at the intersection of 98th Avenue and Cherry Street in front of the school involving a mother of an Elmhurst United student.

Existing Conditions

Overview

Elmhurst United Middle School is located on 98th Avenue in Oakland, California. The school is located in a residential neighborhood. Approximately 50% of students walk to and from school and approximately 25% of students take public transportation. Although just 20% of students arrive to Elmhurst in a private vehicle, the majority of student drop-off and pick-up occurs along the school frontages of Birch Street and Plymouth Street. The peak afternoon pick-up period lasts from approximately 3:10 pm – 3:30 pm on all days except for Wednesdays.

Between 2014 and 2019, there were a total of 18 bicycle and pedestrian collisions within a ¼ mile radius of the school. There were 57 total collisions between a ¼ mile radius and a ½ mile radius of the school, bringing the total number of collisions within ½ mile of the school to 75 collisions. The most severe of these collisions were at intersections along 98th Avenue and International Boulevard. A fatal collision occurred during school dismissal at the intersection of 98th Avenue and Cherry Street in January 2020.

98th Avenue is a major connecting route through East Oakland, with interchanges at both I-580 and I-880, and serves as the direct access route into Oakland International Airport. The road carries substantial commute and airport-related traffic past Elmhurst United.

Observations

The following existing conditions were observed or reported by participants during the school safety assessment (SSA).

- 1. Plymouth Street at 98th Avenue
- The intersection of Plymouth Street and 98th Avenue is a four-way signalized intersection.
- SSA participants observed vehicles entering the center turn lane to bypass vehicles queued at a light ahead in order to reach the turning lane at the intersection.
- SSA participants said that northbound vehicle traffic on 98th Avenue backs up at this intersection during the school dismissal period. SSA participants observed conflicts between turning vehicles and pedestrians crossing Plymouth Street due to high volumes of pedestrian traffic and impatient drivers.
- There is existing, fading red curb around all four corners of the intersection.
- A 'Speed Limit 30' sign is posted on southbound 98th Avenue past Plymouth Street.
- A bicycle detection loop is painted on Plymouth Street at the intersection of 98th Avenue.

2. Cherry Street at 98th Avenue (Front of School)

- There is a high-visibility crosswalk on the eastern approach of this intersection with a rectangular rapid flash beacon (RRFB). There is a transverse crosswalk on the northern approach of this intersection across Cherry Street.
- In late January 2020, OakDOT installed a paint and post median refuge island on the eastern approach of the crosswalk.
- There are AC Transit stops on 98th Avenue upstream of the crosswalk in both directions. Buses pulling to the curb block the bike lane and partially block the travel lane. Bus loading reduces visibility of students entering the crosswalk for vehicles behind, and also results in impatient drivers swinging into the center turn lane to bypass the bus on the left.
- A school staff person volunteers as a crossing guard to help students and families cross 98th Avenue at this location; however, it is common for vehicle traffic to not stop or yield to the crossing guard and pedestrians using the crosswalk.
 - School administrators, staff, and parents said they have requested and petitioned for an official paid crossing guard position at this location for the past 11 years.
- Advance yield pavement markings are painted on 98th Avenue approaching the crosswalk. SSA participants mention that vehicles regularly disregard the advance yield pavement markings at this location and stop closer to the crosswalk.
- SSA participants observed a high volume of students crossing through the eastern and northern approaches of the intersection.
- SSA participants observed vehicles driving in the center turn lane on 98th Avenue in order to bypass vehicles queued at the light or waiting to turn right and reach intersection turn lanes. Participants noted that use of the center turn lane as a bypass lane is a common occurrence, and that vehicles doing this will speed up the center lane to bypass a queue and then merge back into the travel lane in a reckless manner.
- Substantial vehicle queuing occurs on the block of Cherry Street between 98th Avenue and 96th Avenue in both directions during the afternoon period as vehicles double park and wait to pick-up students.



Left: Students walk through the crosswalk across 98th Avenue.

Right: The volunteer crossing guard accompanies students across the street. Vehicles have stopped after the advance yield pavement markings on 98th Avenue.



Above: The paint and post median refuge island installed in the 98th Avenue median.

- 3. Birch Street at 98th Avenue
 - The intersection of Birch Street and 98th Avenue is a signalized, four-way intersection.
 - Advanced limit lines are painted along every approach of the intersection.
 - SSA participants observed a high volume of students traveling north and east through the intersection as they left school.
 - Substantial traffic queuing occurs on southbound Birch Street right near the intersection of 98th Avenue, causing congestion to back up onto 98th Avenue for vehicles attempting to turn onto Birch Street. SSA participants watched vehicles use the center turn lane to bypass traffic queues along 98th Avenue, and travel into the opposing travel lane on Birch Street to bypass vehicles.
 - In the northbound direction on Birch Street, queuing occurs as vehicles wait at the signal to turn left or right onto 98th Avenue. The length of the signal cycle is not sufficient to clear the number of vehicles trying to exit from Birch Street during peak school pick-up.
 - SSA participants said that vendors on the southwest corner of the intersection attract high volumes of students during dismissal creating conflicts for pedestrians traveling on the sidewalk. SSA participants expressed concern that these vendors could also create conflicts between students and vehicles on Birch Street. (See Programmatic Recommendations)

Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program

• There is fading red curb at all corners of the intersection.



Above: Vehicles travel through the intersection of Birch Street at 98th Avenue.

- 4. Olive Street at 98th Avenue
 - The intersection of Olive Street and 98th Avenue is stop-controlled on Olive Street.
 - There are two existing high visibility crosswalks across 98th Avenue. There are two existing transverse crosswalks across Olive Street.
 - SSA participants watched vehicles use the center turn lane to bypass traffic queues along 98th Avenue. Impatient drivers turning left entered the center turn lane and used it as a travel lane to reach the turning queue.
 - SSA participants noted that the red curb is fading at the corners of the intersection.
 - SSA participants reported that vegetation on the southwest corner of the intersection obstructs the visibility of existing School Assembly B signage.



Left: The intersection of Olive Street at 98th Avenue Right: Fading red curb at the intersection.



Above: A vehicle travels through the intersection of Plymouth Street and 98th Avenue.

- 5. 98th Avenue School Frontage
 - SSA participants observed vehicles stopping along 98th Avenue to drop students off in front of the school, blocking both the bike lane and the bus stop.
 - SSA participants observed vehicles speeding along 98th Avenue.
 - During the SSA the sidewalk on 98th Avenue opposite the school was blocked by a parked vehicle in one of the residential driveways; it is not known if this is a regular occurrence.



Left: A vehicle stops in the bike lane along 98th Avenue. Right: An AC Transit bus stops along the 98th Avenue school frontage.

6. Plymouth Street – School Frontage

- SSA participants observed high volumes of students leaving campus and traveling north and south along Plymouth Street.
- SSA participants said that many students are picked up in private vehicles on Plymouth Street.

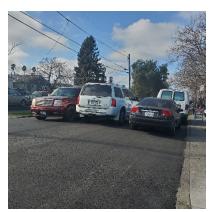
- SSA participants said that there is no dedicated space for the Elmhurst United school bus. Parked and stopped vehicles prevented the school bus from picking students up near the school entrance.
- SSA participants observed vehicles double parked on both sides of the street, which limited travel lane widths and created conflicts between drivers traveling in both directions along Plymouth Street.



Above: Students exit school onto Plymouth Street.



Above: A student on a bicycle enters Plymouth Street. Their visibility is limited by stopped vehicles along the school frontage.



Above: Vehicles navigate narrow road space between two sides of parked or stopped vehicles along Plymouth Street.

- 7. Plymouth Street at 99th Avenue
 - The intersection of Plymouth Street and 99th Avenue is a four-way, stopcontrolled intersection.
 - There are two existing transverse crosswalks on the eastern and southern approaches of the intersection.
 - SSA participants said many students travel through this intersection as they walk home.
 - SSA participants said that vehicles parked up to the corners can limit visibility at the intersection.
 - There are not School Assembly signs on Plymouth Street approaching the school.
- 8. 99th Avenue School Frontage
 - SSA participants said that students walk down 99th Avenue as they travel to and from school.
 - The curb space along 99th Avenue is lightly used in comparison to the Birch Street and Plymouth Street school frontages.
- 9. 99th Avenue at Cherry Street
 - The intersection of 99th Avenue and Cherry Street is uncontrolled.
 - There are no marked crosswalk across 99th Avenue or across Cherry Street at this location.
 - There are existing curb ramps on all legs of the intersection except the northwest corner where the location is obstructed by a utility pole.

10. Birch Street at 99th Avenue and Birch Street School Frontage

- The intersection of Birch Street and 99th Avenue is stop-controlled on all approaches. There are four faded transverse crosswalks at the intersection of Birch Street and 99th Avenue.
- SSA participants observed students traveling this intersection as they walked home from school.
- There are not school assembly signs on Birch Street approaching the school.
- The red curb around the corners of the intersection is fading.
- SSA participants observed high volumes of students leaving campus and traveling north and south along Birch Street.
- SSA participants said that many students are picked up in private vehicles on Birch Street.
- SSA participants observed vehicles parked on both sides of the street limiting travel lane widths. This created conflicts between vehicles traveling in both directions on the street.



Above: Fading crosswalks and red curb.



Left: Vehicle congestion and conflict as drivers navigate space between parked or stopped vehicles on both sides of the street.

Right: Students exit campus and travel along Birch Street.

11. Birch Street at Warner Avenue

- The intersection of Birch Street and Warner Avenue is uncontrolled. There are two faded transverse crosswalks on the northern and eastern approaches of the intersection.
- SSA participants observed northbound traffic backing up through the intersection and blocking traffic.
- SSA participants observed vehicles parked within the intersection which obstructed the visibility of people in the crosswalk. Vehicles also backed up into the intersection due to congestion at the intersection of Birch Street and 98th Avenue and near the school exit.
- SSA participants saw students cross through the unmarked southern approach of the crosswalk.



Left: A student travels down Birch Street toward the intersection. Stopped vehicles are blocking the crosswalk.

Right: Students exit campus and travel along Birch Street.

Participant Comments

SSA participant members of the school community discussed their concerns to City staff and the SR2S team about the safety of students and members of the school community who walk and bike around Elmhurst United Middle School. School staff expressed that their past requests to the City and the school district for traffic safety improvements have not been heard and sufficiently addressed.

SSA participants told City staff and the SR2S team that many school community members have been involved in traffic collisions of varying degrees of severity throughout the past decade. The school community expressed sadness and frustration. Most recently, the mother of an Elmhurst United student was struck and killed by a person driving while crossing in the crosswalk at the intersection of 98th Avenue and Cherry Street.

Recommendations

Engineering Recommendations

Recommendations to improve infrastructure or operations surrounding Elmhurst United Middle School can be seen on the conceptual improvement plan found following this memo.

Policy & Program Recommendations

In addition to engineering improvements, the Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program has many encouragement and educational activities that can benefit students and campus community at Elmhurst United Middle School.

The School Site Coordinator for Elmhurst United Middle School is Sean Mullen. The Site Coordinator can help schedule, organize, and promote many of the program offerings of Alameda County SR2S. The contact information for the Site Coordinator is below:

Sean Mullen, smullen@alamedacountysr2s.org

Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Site Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns, or if you wish to move forward with additional programming activities.

Programs

The following improvements are recommendations for policy and program implementation at Elmhurst United Middle School to increase safety and active commutes to school.

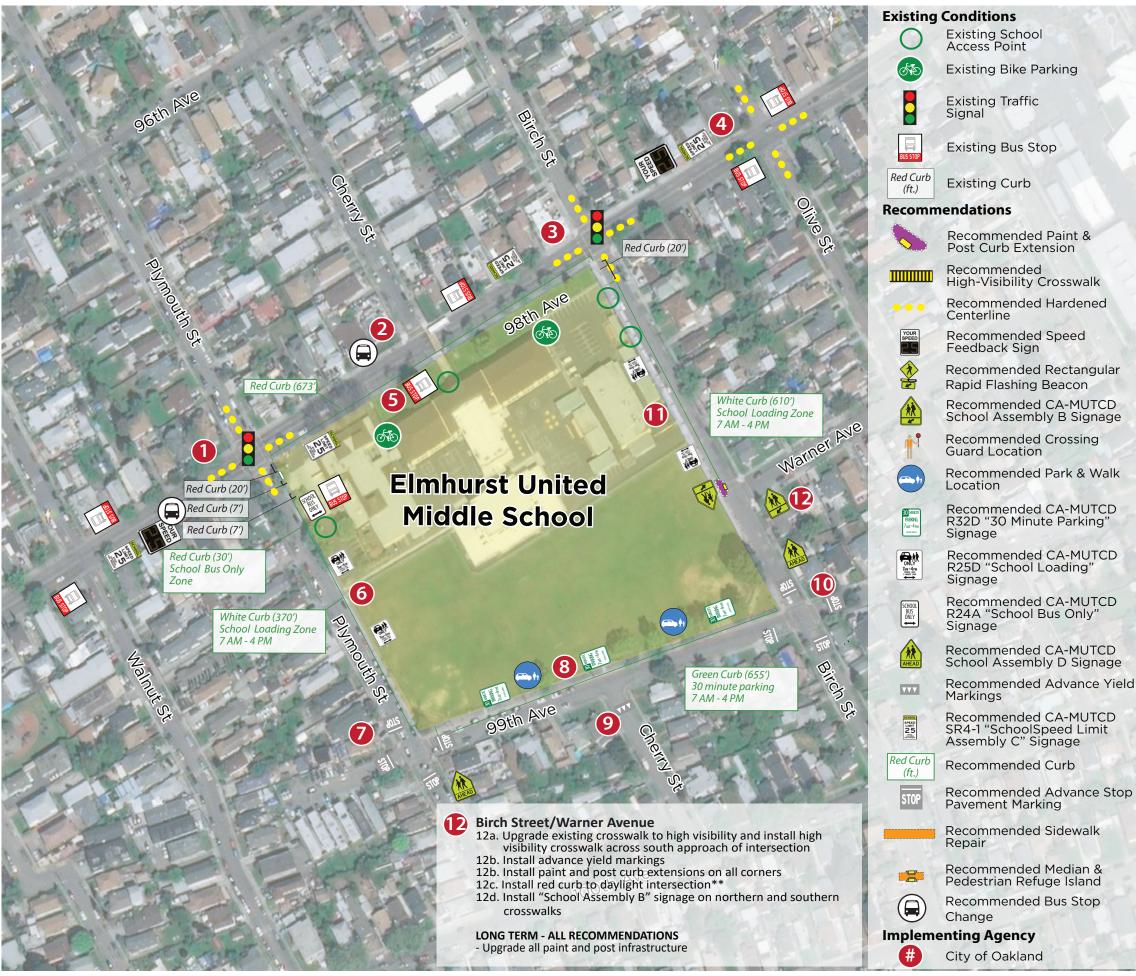
- Develop Walk and Bicycle Route Maps
 - The SR2S Program can create recommended Walk and Bicycle Route Maps. These maps illustrate preferred routes to school for walking and biking. Maps also provide safety tips to encourage better travel behavior.
 - These maps can also be used as a part of Walking School Buses (WSBs), Bicycle Trains (BTs), or other Walk and Roll to School activities. Park and Walk, WSB, and BT meeting locations are also shown on these maps where appropriate.
- Encourage and Help Facilitate Carpooling
 - The SR2S Program can assist schools in working with parents to connect them with other families who live nearby to increase the number of students carpooling. This can reduce congestion by reducing the number of vehicles coming to campus.
- Encourage Parents and Students to Park and Walk from Designated Locations
 - Potential park and walk locations have been identified on the Improvement Plan Map
 - 99th Avenue School Frontage
- Schedule Drive Your Bike Workshops

- This workshop is a great educational opportunity to teach and refresh safe bicycling behavior. These workshops cover a wide range of relevant topics from understanding traffic signals and signs, to bicycle hand signals, to how to safely cross the street. Pedestrian Safety Rodeos and Bicycle Safety Rodeos are geared towards elementary school students.
- Participate in International Walk and Roll to School Day (IRW2SD), the Golden Sneaker Contest (GSC), and Bike to School Day (B2SD)
 - These are the three main countywide encouragement events that occur throughout the academic year. All schools can participate in International Walk and Roll to School Day, held in October every year. The Golden Sneaker Contest, held in spring, is for elementary and middle schools and is a two-week contest both within schools and across the county challenging classrooms to travel to/from school using active and shared modes. All schools can also participate in Bike to School Day, held in tandem with Bike to Work Day, which encourages schools to sponsor Energizer Stations and students and families to bike to school.
- Implement a Drop-Off and Pick-Up Valet Program
- Educate the School Community on Parking, Pick-Up, and Drop-Off Policies
 - The SR2S Program can assist schools to create customized educational materials for parents and the school community to help educate them on pick-up and drop-off procedures and safe travel behavior.
- Work with the Oakland Police Department to enforce curb and parking policies.

Non-transportation Related Recommendations

Many factors contribute to transportation decisions that students and families make about traveling to and from school. Transportation infrastructure is an important factor in that decision-making process, but there are also other factors including personal safety and environment that may be identified through the School Safety Assessment process. The SR2S Program will work closely with the City of Oakland to ensure that these non-transportation recommendations are directed to appropriate city departments.

- 1. Lack of Secure Bicycle Parking and Bicycle Locks
- School staff said that a lack of secure bicycle parking discourages and prevents students from bicycling to school. School staff said that the provision of high-quality, secure bicycle locks to students could encourage ridership.



*The above items are recommendations only and based on Safe Routes to Schools site assessment best practices. Feasibility determination, final design, accessibility, funding, and implementation of any recommended improvements is the responsibility of the appropriate governing agency. **Red curb and/or parking restriction signage should be provided between advance stop/yield markings and the crosswalk. Exact red curb distance should be determined in accordance with the CA-MUTCD and City policies/standards. Red curb not symbolized on map.

Safe Routes to Schools Improvement Plan **Elmhurst United Middle School** Oakland, CA

School Safety Assessment held February 2020



Plymouth Street/98thAvenue 1a. Install hardened centerline on all approaches

1b. Refresh red curb to daylight intersection**

1c. Install new bus shelter and seating at relocated transit stop.



Cherry Street/98thAvenue

2. After the School Safety Assessment, this intersection received many infrastructure improvements including a concrete median and RRFB through OakDOT's Rapid Response Program.



Birch Street/98th Avenue

3a. Install hardened centerline on all intersection approaches 3b. Refresh red curb to daylight intersection** 3c. Study signal timing to increase rate of clearing cars queued on

Birch Street during pick-up hours



Olive Street/98th Avenue

4a. Install hardened centerline on all intersection approaches 4b. Upgrade north and south crosswalks to high visibility 4c. Refresh red curb to daylight intersection** 4d. Trim vegetation to improve visibility of existing signage



98th Avenue - School Frontage

5a. Install red curb along school frontage 5b. Install SR4-1 "School Speed Limit Assembly C" signage along 98th 5c. Consider relocating existing bus stop west of Plymouth St



Plymouth Street - School Frontage 6a. Install red curb and R24A "School Bus Only" signage south of school driveway

6b. Install white curb and R25D "School Loading Zone" signage along remainder of school frontage toward 99th Avenue



Plymouth Street/99thAvenue

7a. Install paint and post curb extensions on all corners

- 7b. Install high visibility crosswalks across north, east, and south approaches of intersection. Install advance stop pavement markings on all approaches
- 7c. Install red curb to daylight intersection**
- 7d. Install "School Assembly B" sign on northbound approach to 99th

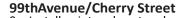


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99thAvenue

8a. Install green curb along school frontage and R32D "30 Minute Parking" signage

- 8b. Consider 99th Ave as recommended Park & Walk location 8c. Repair broken, uplifting sidewalk on 99th Ave



9a. Install paint and post curb extensions, high visibility crosswalk, and advance yield markings across Cherry St 9b. Install red curb to daylight intersection**



10a. Install paint and post curb extensions on all corners 10b. Install high visibility crosswalks and advance stop pavement markings on all legs of intersection 10c. Install "School Assembly B" signage on northbound approach

10d. Refresh fading red curb to daylight intersection**



Birch Street - School Frontage 11a. Install white curb and R25D "School Loading Zone" signage along school frontage from 98th Ave to Warner Ave







Improvements not to scale

Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program is a program o the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ala is funded with Alameda County's local sales tax Measure B, regiona state and federal funds